

Child Support - When parents live in other states, countries, or on tribal lands

When Parents Live in Different States

A “state” can be:

- one of the 50 states
- Washington DC
- US territories Guam, Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands

All state child support programs are very much alike. However, some child support laws and practices might differ.

In most cases, parents do not have to travel to another state to attend hearings. Parents should check with their child support agency about attending court hearings by phone.

Parents should know that the Wisconsin Child Support Program:

- assumes both parents are responsible for supporting their children
- will provide services to parents with a Wisconsin child support court order even if they live in another state
- will provide services to parents who live in Wisconsin but have a child support order from another state
- has no authority on matters of custody or visitation

Child support programs in every state work together to provide services for children.

- Every state will honor another state’s child support order.
- When the two parents live in different states, many cases are “**1-state cases**” not “interstate cases.” States have laws that allow other states to enforce their support orders without involving the other state. For example--if the paying parent lives in another state, Wisconsin may be able to ask the paying parent’s employer to withhold income for support.
- When help is needed, a state will ask another state to assist. This is a “**2-state**” process or an “**interstate case.**” The Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) governs interstate cases in the United States.
- If a case has orders from more than one state, the child support agency will determine which order prevails.
- The child support agency will determine when another state’s help is needed. Parents do not need to contact the other state’s child support program. Their child support agency will take care of that for the parent.
- The parent’s child support agency will keep in contact with the other state to check the status of the case.
- Parents should provide complete and accurate information. Parents should tell their child support agency if they have any information that might be helpful, such as where the other parent lives or works. Their child support agency may forward the information to the other state.

Tribal Child Support Programs

Tribal communities are sovereign nations. State and Tribal child support programs work together to provide services for children.

State and Tribal child support programs are very much alike. However, some child support laws and practices might differ.

- Tribal child support agencies work under their own child support laws and courts. The Tribal child support programs differ from one another according to their local customs.
 - Unlike other states, Tribal child support agencies operate under the Full Faith and Credit to Child Support Orders Act, not the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA).
 - Some Tribal child support programs use their respective state’s automated systems. Others do not.
 - Some Tribes will accept a state’s child support orders, others do not.

Interstate Fees

Some states charge a fee for enforcement activities in their state. These fees vary. Some states charge fees to the parent who receives support. Other states charge the parent who pays support. Some states do not charge fees. If the other state does charge fees, it takes the fees out of the collection before sending the money to Wisconsin.

Services

Most child support services are available locally. Parents may apply for child support services from their local child support agency regardless of where the other parent lives or where their order is from. The child support program will help by:

- Finding an absent parent
- Establishing legal fatherhood (paternity)
- Asking the court to set child support amounts
- Reviewing a support order for possible increase or decrease
 - Asking for a change to the support amount if the review indicates a need for a change (higher or lower)
- Enforcing child support and medical support orders
- Answering your questions and providing general information
- Providing interpreters for and translations of child support information at no cost

The Wisconsin Child Support Program provides:

- Detailed payment and balance information on child support cases online at **childsupport.wisconsin.gov** (information is updated every night except Sunday)
- The amount of last two payments at:
(414) 615-2400 Metro Milwaukee area
(800) 991-5530 outside the Metro Milwaukee area
(877) 209-5209 TDD
- Account histories
- Privacy protection if the release of a parent's address, telephone number, employer or other personal contact information would put the parent at risk.

If a Parent Lives in Another Country

If a parent is in the military and is stationed overseas, the child support program generally handles the case as if that parent lived in another state. However, the Service Members' Civil Relief Act may delay some actions for service members on active duty.

The United States and Wisconsin have child support program agreements with other countries to honor each other's court orders.

Please note: If legal fatherhood (paternity) was established in another country, the paternity might not be recognized in Wisconsin.

Agreements with other countries

All states may work with a country under agreements with the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. Those countries are:

Australia
Canadian Provinces or Territories:
Alberta
British Columbia
Manitoba
New Brunswick
Northwest Territories
Nunavut
Newfoundland/Labrador
Nova Scotia
Ontario

Czech Republic
Finland
Ireland
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Slovak Republic
Switzerland

Wisconsin also has agreements with:

Australia
Austria
Bermuda
Canadian Provinces or Territories:
Alberta
British Columbia
Manitoba
Newfoundland
Nova Scotia
Ontario
Prince Edward Island
Quebec
Saskatchewan
Yukon Territory
Northwest Territories
Czechoslovakia

England
Fiji Islands
France
Germany
Hungary
Jamaica
Mariana Islands
Mexico
New Zealand
Northern Ireland
Norway
Poland
Scotland
South Africa
Sweden
West Midlands

A Wisconsin child support agency or another country may ask the Wisconsin Child Support Program to enter into an agreement with another country.

Who can I call for help?

Contact:

Your Wisconsin county or tribal child support agency (listed in your phone book under “County Government” or tribal name and on the web at **childsupport.wisconsin.gov**)

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement’s website has information about all state and Tribal child support programs:

- www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/extinf.htm
- <http://ocse.acf.hhs.gov/ext/irg/sps/selectastate.cfm?CFID=455060&CFTOKEN=dfbd10f5fb4125d9-F9D4F6EC-FC2C-B197-301BEEAF3CFF1C53>
- www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/resources/tribal/tribal_ivd_and_non_ivd_program_info.doc

DWD is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, please contact (608) 266-9909 or (800) 947-3529 TDD (Toll Free).